

The Editor,

Washington Times,

Dear Sir;

I think for the sake of fairness, the OP-ED of your March 29, 2013 issue, "Islam is not a Religion of Peace" deserves a response and clarification. In the interest of fair and balanced journalism, I hope you will find it fit to print this opinion.

### Islam and Peace with the Opponents

I believe that all the scholars of religions agree that one should pursue religious studies and discussions without personal dogma and contention, nor let one's particular faith or belief lead us to unilateral judgment and fanaticism. Therefore, I submit that your OP-ED of March 29, lacks objectiveness and has deviated from historical facts.

The author has tried to show that Islam is not a religion of peace and reconciliation, and has no other mission except violent confrontation with other religions. He proposes that Moslem students handing out flowers during Easter holy days is inconsistent with their Prophet's dealings with the Christians!

All historians have a consensus of opinion that the Prophet after he left Mecca for Medina, signed a truce with the Pagans and, only after they reneged the agreement he went ahead and occupied Mecca. He declared general amnesty with no bloodshed. As we find in the Koran "If the enemy inclines towards peace you should also incline towards peace and trust in Allah (God)" (Sureh 8, Verse 61).

This is the way that the Prophet dealt with the Pagan aggressors. As to the Christians, the Koran in Chapter 5 verse 82 says «Nearest among them in love to the Believers you will find those who say "We are Christians", because amongst these are men devoted to learning and men who have renounced the world, and they are not arrogant. »

The author goes on to say that Mohammad like the Moslem extremists of today, had no tolerance for the Christians! While it is recorded in history that Christians from Yemen sent their priests to Medina to engage in a debate with the Prophet. Mohammad and his followers received them as honored guests and the prophet allowed them to perform Mass in his mosque. Afterwards they held a discussion about the divinity of Christ. Mohammad recognized Jesus as a great Prophet and God's creation through immaculate conception, but not as the creator. They did not accept his argument and left in peace.

There is no record in history that Mohammad ever mistreated the Christians. In fact, in his early days when his followers were systematically persecuted by the pagans he sent them to Christian Ethiopia and declared Ethiopia as a land where justice prevails. He never engaged in a confrontation with Christian Ethiopia.

As his relation with the followers of Moses, it should be noted that when Mohammad was forced to immigrate to Medina, he signed a treaty with the Jewish population that Moslems and Jews were united to defend the city from Pagan aggressors. Only after the Jews ceased to honor this treaty and aligned themselves with the enemy he treated them as traitors.

Contemporary scholars of history condemn the Jews' action. Israel Wolfenjohn, the great Jewish orientalist, in his book about the history of Jews in Arab lands admits that this act of treason during that era was a great mistake and inconsistent with teachings of Torah (Pages 142 & 143, History of Jews in Arab Lands). Therefore the Prophet had no choice other than to engage them and banish them from Medina. It is baffling that the author condemns this action but remains silent about the battles of Moses as described in the Old Testament, where he orders his followers to massacre the entire male population of Median, loot all their possessions and enslave the women and children (Numbers 31). The author recognizes Moses as God's Prophet, but admonishes Mohammad for fighting the traitors! He discredits Mohammad for his polygamy, but accepts Jacobs as a genuine prophet despite of his four wives whose names are recorded in the Old Testament. Are these judgments fair and unbiased?

During the era of the Great Inquisition when thousands were burned at the stake by the church, these horrendous acts were in no way considered as related to Jesus, but the sins and trespasses of radical Moslems are those of the Prophet Mohammad's making! The vile offences of pedophile priests are their doings, but the despicable acts of terror by Moslem extremists are related to the Prophet and his teachings! Is this a just assessment?

The author writes that Jesus unlike Mohammad never engaged in any war in his life-time nor even advocated violence in his sermons. I submit that the writer has overlooked that according to the Bible, Jesus tells his disciples: "If you have no swords, sell the shirt on your back and buy a sword" (Luke 22). Surely the purpose of the sword was not to scratch their backs, but to defend themselves. If in Christianity war is permissible under certain circumstances, then why not in Islam? In Mathew 10, Jesus says 'Do not think that I have come to establish peace on earth, but have come to set the sword'. This Christian campaign for justice is acceptable, but any such action by Mohammad is condemned as unjust, is this not a biased and one-sided judgment?

All those so called Christians slaughtering innocent schoolchildren are obviously not inspired by the teachings of Jesus, but the misguided Moslem terrorist are related to Mohammad and his teachings! Is this an unbiased conclusion?

Did Jesus Christ not say: "You notice the hair in your brother's eye, but ignore a blade in your own eye"?

In our world today, there exist Christians who vehemently oppose any kind of mass killing and acts of terror. Amongst us Moslems, also, there is a significant majority who similarly abhor such acts and sectarian violence.

Let us for the sake of God stop maligning each other, desist from these false accusations and together help to build a world governed by logic, peace and morality.

**Mostafa H. Tabatabaei**

**Islamic Scholar**

**Tehran- Iran**